

Peace in Kashmir



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Introduction

I HAVE BEEN writing about Kashmir since 1968. From the very outset I have been of the firm view that unrealistic politics has played havoc with Kashmir, but that now through realistic politics we can once again lead Kashmir to progress and development. Kashmiri Muslims have today become disillusioned. They are living in an atmosphere of mistrust. The aim of this book is to assist them to emerge from the disillusionment, and to start afresh with new-found courage and confidence.

It is indeed possible for the Kashmiris to start a new life at any given time, but for this, two conditions must be met. First, they must hold themselves responsible for the unpleasant situation they are faced with today. As long as they continue to hold others responsible for it, it will be almost impossible for them to make a new start. Second, more importantly, they must come out of their dream world and learn to live in the world of practical realities. They must abandon the wishful thinking their incompetent leaders have fed them on. For their growth and advancement to take place, they must carve out a new plan of adjustment with the present situation. Admitting the existing realities, the Kashmiri Muslims must arrive at the brave decision—willingly and not out of compulsion—that destiny has decreed that they should be a part of India. They have no option but to willingly accept this verdict of destiny.

Furthermore, this is not an evil. It is certainly, in every respect, good for them. India is a big country. It has freedom and democracy. Here reside more than two hundred million people of their faith. Almost all the big

Islamic institutions of the sub-continent are located in India. All across India, is imprinted a thousand year-history of the Muslims, which should give them courage and inspiration.

Moreover, India provides great opportunities to Muslims in the footsteps of the Sufis to follow and spread the peaceful message of Islam—a task which, according to a *hadith*, can earn them salvation in the hereafter.

Once, on a short visit to Karachi, I met a Muslim industrialist who told me that the Indian Muslims were in a far better position than they were. When I asked him why, he answered, “Pakistan is a small country. So we have a limited market for the products we manufacture. In contrast, India is a vast country. If you produce a product in India; you have a huge market to sell it in.”

What this Pakistani industrialist told me has now become a fact of life. In the twenty-first century, the Muslims of India have emerged as the most developed Muslim community in the whole of the subcontinent. This is in no way an exaggeration. And a comparative survey of any city can establish the validity of this statement. For example, today the richest Muslim, of not only the subcontinent but of the whole Muslim world, is an Indian: Azim Hashim Premji of Bangalore.

If the Muslims of Kashmir whole-heartedly were to become a part of India, then great opportunities for all kinds of development would open up to them. The prospects of progress here in the fields of education, economics and other fields are not in evidence anywhere else.

Furthermore, in the sphere of politics, there exist great

opportunities for them. Sometime ago I published an article in Hindi, Urdu and English newspapers, in which I urged the Kashmiri Muslims to abandon the policy of confrontation and whole-heartedly become a part of India. Then the first Muslim Prime Minister of democratic India could very well be a Kashmiri Muslim. I have no doubts about this.

Kashmiri Leadership

I HAVE BEEN thinking of the issue of Kashmir since its beginning. By the grace of God, the view I initially formed on this issue appears correct to me even today. I have never felt the need to change it.

I have been writing about Kashmir since 1968. My first article was published in the Urdu Weekly, *Al-Jamiat*, the official organ of the Jamiat ul Ulema-i-Hind. I quote here from *Al-Jamiat*.

“The time for receiving one’s rights is when the decision is in one’s own hands. But our leaders have realized this fact only when their case has become a moral one. I have read the speeches of the Kashmiri leader, Shaikh Abdullah, who is very bold and has made sacrifices which have earned him the title Sher-e-Kashmir. But his present Kashmiri campaign has nothing to do with reality.

“In 1947 he was in a position—had he opted for a realistic policy—to make a decision on the issue of Kashmir according to his own will. But, owing to his unrealistic dreams, he let the moment of decision pass him by. Now, when the time for decision making has slipped from his hands, he is making a hue and cry. But now his clamour, a crying out for justice, on moral grounds, has no value in the world of today.”

“Once a young man opened a shop. He had set foot in life’s struggle for the first time. He had no idea of the safeguards needed in life when you initiate such a task. So he used an ordinary lock for his shop. One day he returned from the shop looking very downcast. An

elderly acquaintance asked him what the matter was and why he was looking so sad. He replied, 'Thieves broke in my shop. The lock I used was an ordinary one and someone broke open the lock at night and stole all the goods.' The old man pointed out that this had been his own fault. The young man said, 'Yes. Now with this experience, I have learnt that I must use an extra strong lock on my shop door.' Then the old man asked, 'Is this something to be learnt after having such an experience? When you started out as a shopkeeper you should have known from day one that a strong lock needed to be used.'

"As far as a shop break-in or other similar personal matter is concerned, there is the possibility that one may make amends after such an experience. But, in the case of a national decision, the issue is totally different. In personal matters, even after incurring a loss, there is the possibility of being successful once again with further effort. But in national matters when the time for decision has slipped from one's hands the problem becomes much more complicated and difficult to resolve.

"National leadership is only for those who can envision the future in the present. Those who can see only the present and the past cannot lead the nation. However, by their unwise steps they can surely complicate matters." (*Al-Jamiat Weekly*, New Delhi, June 14, 1968, p. 4).

Since then I have been writing on the Kashmir issue over the years. If my writings for the last 35 years were to be collected, they would form a voluminous book. By God's grace my writings have benefited a great number of Kashmiris, who, in consequence, have abandoned the

path of militancy in favour of education and progress. I constantly receive letters and phone calls from Kashmiris telling me of the change in their thinking.

A 'movement' implies a movement of the masses but, in fact, it is instigated by leaders who mobilize the masses through their fiery speeches and writings.

Then in the name of the masses they earn all the distinction that goes with leadership. This state of affairs increases the responsibility of the leader to a very great degree. That being so, only that person should enter the field who has made the preparations necessary for the performance of the task.

Those who enter this field without the necessary preparations are grave wrongdoers in the eyes of God, irrespective of how popular they are among the ignorant masses. The final hour has now come for the Kashmiris to rise above their leaders and to view the whole matter afresh – not in the light of the pronouncements of their leaders but in the light of practical realities. In doing so, they must chart the course of their lives anew. There is simply no other way for them to succeed.

Lessons from Nature

THE ARMED UPRISING in Kashmir against India began in October 1989. Just a month before this, I visited Kashmir, where I had to address a large gathering at the Tagore Hall in Srinagar. On the same trip I met with numerous Kashmiris. One day, I went with a group of Kashmiri Muslims to an open valley just outside Srinagar.

All around were beautiful scenes of nature. From the towering peaks rivulets were cascading down the valley. As I sat on the banks of a stream along with my Kashmiri acquaintances, I noticed the way the stream flowed till it arrived at a boulder. It did not try to break the rock to be able to move ahead. Rather, when it met the rock, it simply swerved to the left or to the right, around the sides of the rock, and kept on with its journey uninterrupted. This is an inevitable happening with all streams and rivers, but when a foolhardy man finds a 'boulder' blocking his path, he wants to smash it so that he can forge ahead, even if that results in his journey coming to an abrupt end once and for all. This is precisely what has happened in Kashmir.

I turned to my companions and said, 'This is a message from Nature to you. This fact of Nature tells you that if in the journey of life you face a hurdle, you should not seek to hurl yourself against it to carry on ahead. Rather, what you must do is carefully avoid the hurdle and continue with your journey. This is the secret of success in life. This applies equally to communities and individuals.

The only way to progress is to avoid the hurdles and avail of the opportunities to build one's life.

Personally, I do not regard the military or political presence of India in Kashmir as a hurdle for the Kashmiris. The Indian army initially entered Kashmir for the sole purpose of protecting its borders, along which it was stationed till 1989. Indian soldiers did not at that time enter Kashmiri villages or other localities. But when in October 1989 Kashmiri activists took up weapons against India and launched a militant movement, the Indian Army in order to combat the uprising entered those Kashmiri settlements where the militants were present. Even if the Kashmiri Muslims had considered the presence of Indian soldiers in Kashmir to be a hurdle or a challenge, the only sensible way out for them was precisely what Nature itself has taught us—that is to say, to ignore the problems and avail of the existing opportunities.

This is not a principle that one should adopt simply out of compulsion. This principle is a universal one. It applies to all individuals and groups. It applies just as much to Muslim-majority countries as it does to countries where Muslims are a minority.

Unwise Method

A BASIC PRINCIPLE of success in life is that, in controversial matters, one should willingly accept whatever is available to one at the very outset. If we fail to do so in the initial stage in a bid to get more than what we are being offered, we only prolong the conflict. Then the conflict is bound to become more complicated. Consequently, we will lose even whatever was available to us in the first instance.

Let me cite an example to clarify this point. In 1917, the British drew up a plan, known as the Balfour Declaration, to partition Palestine. This division was clearly in favour of the Arabs. By the terms of this scheme, less than half of the land was to be given to the Jews and more than half to the Arabs, inclusive of the entire city of Jerusalem. However, the Muslim leaders of that time refused to accept this plan. If they had adopted a pragmatic and realistic approach and accepted whatever was being offered to them at the time, they could have then devoted all their energies and resources to constructive purposes. The condition of the Palestinians could, in consequence, have been much better than that of the Jews. However, owing to the unrealistic approach of the Muslim leaders, the Palestinians lost their all and had to face death and destruction.

Exactly the same has happened in the case of Jammu and Kashmir because of the utter ineptitude of the leaders of Kashmir and Pakistan.

On this score, the record of the injudiciousness of Muslim leaders is a very long one. I will allude to just one aspect of this here. In 1947, when India was

partitioned, Pakistani leaders adopted a completely unrealistic stance and staked their claim to two Hindu-majority Indian princely states: Junagadh and Hyderabad. Had the Pakistani leaders adopted a sensible and pragmatic approach and not demanded that Junagadh and Hyderabad—which were far from the Pakistani borders and deep inside Indian territory—should accede to Pakistan, the issue of Kashmir would never have become so serious as it did. The issue of Kashmir could then have very easily been solved in favour of Pakistan. But the two-pronged thrust of the Pakistani leaders resulted in Pakistan getting neither Junagadh nor Hyderabad, and, at the same time, they also failed to acquire Kashmir.

Let me cite some facts to reinforce my point. Chaudhry Muhammad Ali was the Prime Minister of Pakistan in the period 1955-1957. Prior to this, he had been a senior minister in the cabinet of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan. In his voluminous book, *Emergence of Pakistan*, he relates that shortly after the Partition, the Muslim ruler of the Hindu-majority princely state of Junagadh declared that his state would accede to Pakistan. India refused to accept this decision and sent in its armed forces to take over the state and it was then incorporated into India. After this, a meeting was held in Delhi, attended by Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel, from the Indian side, and Liaquat Ali Khan and Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, from the Pakistani side. Chaudhry Muhammad Ali writes:

‘Sardar Patel, although a bitter enemy of Pakistan, was a greater realist than Nehru. In one of the discussions between the two Prime Ministers, at which Patel and I were also present, Liaquat Ali Khan dwelt at length on

the inconsistency of the Indian stand with regard to Junagadh and Kashmir. If Junagadh, despite its Muslim ruler's accession to Pakistan, belonged to India because of its Hindu majority, how could Kashmir, with its Muslim majority, be a part of India simply by virtue of its Hindu ruler having signed a conditional instrument of accession to India? If the instrument of accession signed by the Muslim ruler of Junagadh was of no validity, the instrument of accession signed by the Hindu ruler of Kashmir was also invalid. If the will of the people was to prevail in Junagadh, it must prevail in Kashmir as well. India could not claim both Junagadh and Kashmir.

'When Liaquat Ali made these incontrovertible points, Patel could not contain himself and burst out: "Why do you compare Junagadh with Kashmir? Talk of Hyderabad and Kashmir, and we could reach an agreement." Patel's view at this time, and even later, was that India's efforts to retain Muslim-majority areas against the will of the people was a source not of strength but of weakness to India. He felt that if India and Pakistan agreed to let Kashmir go to Pakistan and Hyderabad to India, the problems of Kashmir and of Hyderabad could be solved peacefully and to the mutual advantage of India and Pakistan.' (*Emergence of Pakistan*, pp. 299-300)

Another relevant example appears in another book titled, *The Nation That Lost its Soul*, written by a well-known Pakistani leader, Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan. This book, consisting of 460 pages, was originally written in English, its Urdu edition, titled *Gum-gashta-e-Qaum* was published from Lahore. We give below a quotation from this book.

"Later, during the attack on Kashmir, Mountbatten

came to Lahore. At a dinner attended by Liaquat, Governor Mudie and the four Ministers of West Punjab, Lord Mountbatten conveyed the message from Patel, the strongman of India, asking Liaquat to abide by the rules over the future of Indian States previously agreed upon between the Congress and the Muslim League: that those States whose subjects made up of a majority of a community and the State was contiguous and adjoining a Dominion, would accede to the adjoining country. Patel had said that Pakistan could take Kashmir and let go Hyderabad Deccan which had a majority Hindu population and was nowhere near Pakistan by sea or land. After delivering this message, Lord Mountbatten went to sleep in the Lahore Government House. I, being overall in charge of the Kashmir operations, went to Liaquat Ali Khan. I suggested to him that, as the Indian Army had entered Kashmir in force and we would be unable to annex Kashmir with tribal mujahids, or even with our inadequate armed forces, we should make haste to accept Patel's proposal.

"Nawabzada turned round to me and said, 'Sardar Sahib, have I gone mad to give up Hyderabad State, which is much larger than the Punjab, for the sake of the rocks of Kashmir?'

"I was stunned by the Prime Minister's reaction and ignorance of our geography and his lack of wisdom. I thought he was living in a fool's paradise and did not understand the importance of Kashmir to Pakistan while hoping to get Hyderabad, which at best was only quixotic wishful thinking. It was not connected with Pakistan anywhere. As a protest, I resigned from the position I was holding in Kashmir operations."

If one accepts the statements of Pakistani leaders, it

is clear evidence that the conflict over Kashmir was created entirely by Muslim leaders and no one else. Here I will add that, according to the law of nature, it is not possible for an individual or a community to exact the price of its own mistakes from others. A person has himself to pay the price for his own folly, and this rule applies equally to communities. Pakistan is no exception to this rule.

Be Realistic

IN APRIL 1986, a group of Sikhs got together in Amritsar and declared what they called the independent state of Khalistan. At this time I wrote an article in the *Hindustan Times*, captioned 'Acceptance of Reality'. This article was about the situation in Punjab and Kashmir. Addressing the people of Punjab and Kashmir, I warned them that the movements for an independent Punjab and an independent Kashmir would never succeed. I said that such movements were tantamount to breaking one's head against the boulder of reality. Nothing could be gained from such movements, except, of course, some broken heads and worse. I advised the people of both states to be realistic, to accept the status quo and build their lives along positive lines.

The Sikhs realized this shortly thereafter and the militant movement for Khalistan soon came to an end. I am sure that, finally, the Kashmiris, too, will adopt this stance, but this might happen only after much suffering and destruction, indeed communal suicide.

The reason perhaps for this difference is that the Sikhs had no beautiful ideology to justify their death and destruction, whereas the Muslims can offer a beautiful justification even for such heinous acts as suicide bombing.

Here I would like to cite an experience worth mentioning. It was on January 27, 1992, that two educated Kashmiri Muslims came to meet me in Delhi. They were not members of any militant group. But they fully supported the Kashmiri militant movement. They were

not active militants in the practical sense of the term but they certainly were so at the intellectual level.

In the course of our conversation, I told these men that their self-styled 'Kashmir movement' was not in any respect proper or acceptable. I said it was certainly not an Islamic jihad and it was obviously not going to establish an Islamic system. Nor, I added, did separation from India make any sense. The 'movement' could only spell more destruction for the Kashmiris. The men passionately defended the 'movement' and even claimed that the Kashmiris would shortly score a 'glorious success'. Then, at my request, they penned a few words in my diary to which they appended their signatures. 'Once we separate from India', they wrote, 'our land will become an Islamic Kashmir.'

I told the men that what they had written was nothing but baseless, wishful thinking. They would soon realize, I said, how mistaken and unrealistic they were. Then, I penned the following words in my diary in their presence.

'If Kashmir separates from India, the independent state of Kashmir that would come into being or, if Kashmir joins Pakistan, the Pakistani province of Kashmir that would be formed, would be a ruined Kashmir. The choice before Kashmiris is not between Indian Kashmir and Pakistani Kashmir, but, rather, between Indian Kashmir and a destroyed Kashmir.'

18 years have now passed since this meeting. The developments that have taken place in these years clearly prove that the words of the Kashmiri mujahids were based on nothing but wishful thinking. On the other hand, whatever I had, with the grace of God, written in

my dairy on that day and had told those men has become an undeniable truth. The developments over the last two decade have clearly indicated that what will truly benefit Kashmir is not independence or joining Pakistan, but rather being part of India and abandoning the path of violence in exchange for peaceful reconstruction and progress.

Avoid Political Confrontation

‘A WISE MAN is one who knows the relative value of things.’

Judging by this saying, it appears that the Kashmiris do not even have a single wise leader who is aware of the dire consequences of taking to the path of militancy for the people of Kashmir themselves. This issue can be understood in the light of a verse in the Quran that explains that when the Prophet Solomon sent a letter to the Queen of Sheba, demanding that she submit, she sought the advice of her courtiers, who told her that because they had considerable military strength, there was no need for them to submit to anyone. The Queen replied thus: “Surely, when mighty kings invade a country, they despoil it and humiliate its noblest inhabitants – these men will do the same.”

Here the Quran stresses to a very important fact, and that is that when one confronts a powerful ruler, one must think carefully of the consequences of doing so. If the consequences would prove counter-productive, then confrontation must be avoided. Experience proves that confronting a very powerful ruler is almost always counter-productive. It causes death and destruction on a massive scale, and the honourable are humiliated. That is why confronting a powerful ruler must be avoided as far as possible, even if the ruler is just and virtuous. But if certain people choose to ignore this advice or principle, and seek to directly confront a powerful ruler, it is pointless for them to complain later on about the loss of life and property. They ought to know that the destruction that they suffer is the price they have to pay

for their confrontation with an established ruler. Those who adopt the path of militancy in order to fight existing governments have necessarily to pay such a price. It is simply impossible for a certain group to make a mistake and then expect another group to pay the price.

I have come across numerous articles and books by Kashmiris and Pakistanis with such titles as *The Wounded Kashmir* or *The Wounded Valley* and so on. These writings talk about the oppression being heaped on the Kashmiris by the Indian army. Such writings are quickly disseminated across the world. Yet, in practical terms, they have had no positive result at all. All they represent is screaming and berating, and have no positive impact. I am of the view that the blame for the fact that all this complaining and protesting has had no positive result must be placed on the shoulders of the Kashmiris themselves. The Kashmiris can learn a valuable lesson from the words of the Queen of Sheba as recorded in the Quran, to which I referred above. The Queen adopted a wise policy that avoided the possibility of destruction and oppression by the army. On the contrary, due to their foolishness, the Kashmiris have actually invited the Indian army to trample on them and to make them the target of their oppression.

The beginnings of a solution to the vexed conflict over Kashmir is for the Kashmiris themselves to recognize their mistakes and learn a lesson from the example of the Queen of Sheba as described in the Quran. This will greatly assist them in planning afresh the course of their life as a people. There is simply no other possible solution.

The Demand of Wisdom

The Quran states: "People of the Book! Do not go to extremes in your religion." (4:171)

ACCORDING TO A tradition the Prophet of Islam observed: "Avoid the path of extremism: this will lead to more severe conditions." (Abu Daud, Sunan Abu Daud, Vol. 1, page 197) In present times, this has been the case in all those Muslim countries where groups have taken to the path of militancy to attain their objectives. And it has turned out in Kashmir that the culture of violence over the last two decades has had no positive result. On the contrary, it has caused so much destruction that it is simply indescribable. The ongoing conflict in Kashmir has played havoc with its economy and educational system. It has led to the deaths of over a hundred thousand people, with many more being injured and crippled for life. It has taken a terrible toll of the moral fabric of Kashmiri society. Another big loss is that it has forced a huge number of well-qualified and highly educated Kashmiris to migrate to other parts of India and other countries. The culture of the Kashmiris (Kashmiriat) to preserve which the movement was launched, has been totally ruined.

Kashmir once had a flourishing tourism industry, as a result of which commercial activities continued the whole year round. But this militancy has dealt a death blow to the tourist industry. Once a Kashmiri remarked that formerly they could even sell pebbles, but today even their apples have no buyers. Thus the movement which was launched in the name of the Kashmiri people has not benefited the common man in any way, but it

has certainly bolstered the fortunes of their self-styled leaders.

The Quran enjoins its followers: "Do not grieve for what has escaped you." (57:23) This verse of the Quran tells us of the law that God has established in this world. According to this law, every person and every group has to experience some form of loss at some time or the other. No person or community is exempt from this rule, for this is a part of the divine creation plan. No one has the power to change it.

But along with this there is another law of Nature that in this world opportunities shall never cease to exist. Whenever one opportunity is lost, another one is available instantly alongside it. Hence, wisdom demands that we should forget our lost opportunities and, instead, make use of the new ones that are available to us. This is precisely what the Kashmiris should do.

Exploitative leaders thrive on fanning people's discontent and their sense of being deprived. On the other hand, the true leader is one who launches his movement by using existing opportunities; and, by pointing them out, instead of pointing out obstacles, shows his people the path to a new future.

Peace and Justice

YOU CAN LIVE in an eternal state of peace but you cannot live in an eternal state of war. But perhaps Kashmiri leaders are simply unaware of this historical reality. They want to endlessly prolong their senseless war.

Little do they know that, in the course of the Second World War, Japanese soldiers resorted to suicide bombing on a massive scale but that this tactic completely failed. No single ruler in history, no matter how powerful, has been able to maintain a state of continual war over an extended period. How then, one must ask, do the weak people of Kashmir hope to keep up their futile struggle forever? What is bound to happen, sooner or later, is that the Kashmiri militants will one day tire of fighting and will find themselves compelled to give up arms. The right way for the fighting to stop, however, would be for the Kashmiris on their own to decide, willingly and guided by wisdom—rather than out of fatigue or sheer compulsion—to end this destructive war at once.

Once, in conversation with a highly-educated Kashmiri Muslim. I observed that what Kashmir needs most desperately today is peace. He replied that they certainly did want peace, but, he asked, what sort of peace? True peace, he said, was inseparable from justice. Peace without justice, he argued, suits the oppressors but not the oppressed.

My reply was that this was a grave misunderstanding—one that was shared by all the Muslim 'leaders' throughout the world. Peace, I said, is defined as the absence of war. This is a correct definition. Peace is not aimed at establishing justice. Rather, peace

is aimed at creating the necessary conditions for working towards securing justice. And this, I said, was in accordance both with reason and with Islamic teachings.

When the Prophet Muhammad entered into a peace treaty with the pagan Quraysh of Makkah at Hudaibiyah, he secured only peace, not justice. However, this peace then created a normal, peaceful environment that enabled the Prophet to work and secure justice as well. This clearly shows that justice is not an integral component of peace. Rather, justice can be secured only after peace is established, by using the opportunities that peace provides. It is not a direct and immediate product of peace.

The leaders of the Kashmiri militant movement constantly argue that they want the Kashmir issue to be resolved in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nation's Security Council. In other words, they insist that a referendum be held in Kashmir to decide its political future.

This stand proved to be invalid both legally and logically when Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of United Nations, declared during his visit to Islamabad that this resolution of the United Nations had now become irrelevant.

However, apart from that I will say something in principle: that one can secure one's rights only on the basis of one's own strength and not on the basis of another's power. It is simply unrealistic and wishful thinking to expect that the United Nation's resolutions will be acted upon in one's own favour.

This is not an Islamic Movement

KASHMIRI MILITANTS CLAIM that their present war is an Islamic jihad. This is based on a total fallacy. The silence of the Ulama in this matter has further added to their conviction. The present war in Kashmir is certainly not a jihad. Those who are engaged in this can never be rewarded with jihad.

Just as there are certain rules to be abided by in offering ritual prayer, so, too, must jihad in the path of God (*jihad fi sabil Allah*) follow certain rules that Islam has laid down. It is obvious that the self-styled mujahidin in Kashmir do not abide by these rules. For instance, a jihad needs to have a single *amir* or leader. It also requires a Muslim territory that can serve as its headquarters. A jihad cannot be fought for land, power, or wealth, but simply to establish God's word. One of the fiqh principle says, "To declare war is the prerogative of an established state (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Kitabul fitan, Hadith No. 2957). Another condition for Jihad is that it has to be purely for defensive purpose, as given in the following verse of the Quran, "But you are free to do battle with these who are fighting against you." (60:8-9). The ongoing movement in Kashmir meets none of these necessary conditions to qualify as a jihad. It can be called a guerilla war or a proxy war, but certainly not an Islamic jihad. And both guerilla war and proxy war have no legitimacy in Islam. A guerilla war is un-Islamic because, in Islam, announcing and leading a jihad is the task of an established ruler, not of the common man. Proxy war is prohibited in Islam because the government that engages in such a war does not openly declare its intentions, while an open declaration of war is a necessary condition for an Islamic war.

All these facts, as well as the completely useless war that continues to be waged in Kashmir, cry out to the Kashmiri Muslims to put an end to fighting without a moment's delay. This fighting will not benefit them one bit, either in this world or in the hereafter, in the life after death. Rather, it will be a cause for their destruction in both worlds. It will lead to their destruction in the hereafter because they are engaged in a war that they wrongly claim to be an Islamic jihad but which, according to the Islamic rules, is not a jihad at all.

A struggle for political independence is not an Islamic movement, contrary to what its proponents might insist. Rather, it is wholly a communitarian or nationalist movement. There is no harm if such a movement is launched in the name of a nationality, but to claim it to be an 'Islamic movement' or an 'Islamic jihad' is certainly wrong.

In this regard, it is instructive to note that no prophets of God launched any movement for the political freedom of their country or people, although most of the prophets lived in similar situations in which political leaders launch movements for national liberation. For instance, at the time of the Prophet Joseph, a pagan foreign family ruled over Egypt. Yet, the Prophet Joseph did not launch a political movement or struggle against them. After the Prophet Joseph, certain political leaders, who were not among his companions, did launch such a movement.

If the Kashmiri Muslims want to make their movement an Islamic one, the first thing they must do is completely renounce violence. They must also admit that the movement that they have launched had actually been a communitarian or nationalist one, on which they

wrongly stuck an 'Islamic' label. Naturally, such a movement cannot win divine succour.

One often hears Kashmiris lament that they are being crushed on two sides—by the Indian Army, on the one hand, and by militants, on the other. They also claim that when their jihad was launched, a good number of pious and well-meaning people were involved in it but that now all sorts of criminals and other bad elements have joined it, thereby giving it a bad name. This, I believe, is wholly incorrect. Sooner or later, guerilla war inevitably culminates in this sort of situation. At first, guerilla war might be led by people who appear good and sincere, but later, inevitably, all sorts of bad elements join it. This is what has happened in the case of Kashmir, too, where bad elements wrongly seek to give religious legitimacy to killing and looting by calling their actions an Islamic jihad.

This is why I believe that this excuse has absolutely no positive purpose at all for the Kashmiri Muslims themselves. They must admit that the launching of their guerilla war was wrong from the very first day itself. To admit their mistake is the first step that they must take, and they must desist from heaping the blame on others for whatever has happened in Kashmir.

Realistic Politics

SUCCESS IN LIFE can be achieved by availing of a second chance which is always there to be tapped. This fact is as true for Kashmir as it is for other countries. For instance, the first chance of success for India was to rise as an undivided India, but that could not be realized. Then our leaders availed of the second chance and now India is fast emerging as a powerful, developed country. This has happened in one form or another with other countries. Every country has in one way or the other lost the first chance, but have gained new life by availing the second chance. The same can be the case with Kashmir.

The leaders of Kashmir had a political dream for their land prior to the Partition—that was, in a sense, their first chance to fulfil this dream. But they lost this chance with the Partition in 1947. The Kashmiris now have a second chance, which they must fully avail of so that they can build a new Kashmir based on realities. The leaders of Kashmir dreamt of an independent country for their people. But this proved to be impossible because of political and geographical realities. Today, the only realistic possibility for Kashmir is to remain a part of India, with the special status as granted to it by Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. Till now, the Kashmiri leaders have been engaged in what I call ‘the politics of the impossible’. Now, it behoves them to recognize practical realities and engage in ‘the politics of the possible’. The Kashmiris must forget the past and learn to live in the present. They must seek to chart the course of their lives while recognizing the practical realities of the present, rather than living in the past and dreaming of impossible solutions and chimerical schemes.

If Pakistan followed the policy of the acceptance of reality with regard to Kashmir, it would not be something novel for it. In the case of Bangladesh (East Pakistan) it has already agreed to this policy of the acceptance of reality. This being so, Pakistan has no excuse to justify its stand.

Global Opportunities

THE KASHMIRI MUSLIMS have certain advantages or plus points which perhaps they have not discovered so far. For instance, if they choose willingly to be part of India, they can enjoy the status of being a part of a country that has the distinction of having the world's largest Muslim population, more than Pakistan and Bangladesh, after Indonesia. If the Kashmiri Muslims were conscious of this fact they would regard it as one of life's great immense blessings. Such positive thinking would make them confident, courageous and totally free from any inferiority complex. The Kashmiri Muslims, due to their incompetent leaders, have lost their first chance. But the second chance still exists for them. They can still find everything they want by availing of that second chance.

Today, the whole world has become a global village. Now the change in the political system has become relative. Our new global conditions have made it possible for anyone living anywhere on the face of the earth to communicate with people across the world without any restrictions. In such a situation, even if people and groups do not form part of the political class or do not have a state of their own, they can still have all the benefits which in earlier times they could have had only if they were part of the ruling class or had their own independent state. Singapore and Japan provide such examples in modern times. These global opportunities can be made available to the Kashmiris, too, but only if they act wisely and learn how to use them.

Victory for Both

IT OFTEN HAPPENS that two groups quarrel over a piece of land. A part of the land is grabbed by one group and the rest by the other. One way to end the quarrel is for both groups to fight each other till, at last, both of them are destroyed in the process. The other, and obviously more sensible, way is for both parties to agree that each will keep that part of the land that is currently in its possession, that they will cease fighting, and that they will concentrate, instead, on developing the land that they control. This is called a 'win-win solution'.

This, to my mind, is the best and most practicable formula to solve the conflict between India and Pakistan over the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Both India and Pakistan presently control parts of the state. If the two agree to remain in possession of whatever part of the state they presently control and cease fighting, that would be a 'win-win solution'. They could then turn their attention to, and focus their resources on developing their own countries.

It is true that the portion of Kashmir under Pakistani control is considerably smaller in size than that which is under Indian rule. But the size of a territory is only of relative importance. What is most important is to use one's available resources in a wise manner, even if the area under one's control is small. Numerous small countries or territories have flourished and emerged as prosperous commercial and financial hubs across the world—Singapore, Hong Kong, Dubai, Taiwan, for instance.

Man is a psychologically complex creature. If one is

driven by negative and destructive emotions and impulses, one's whole personality turns negative. Conversely, if one is driven by positive thinking, one will have a positive personality. This rule applies as much to individuals as it does to groups, communities and countries. The vexed issue of the political status of Jammu and Kashmir has been a continuing source of conflict and bitterness between India and Pakistan from 1947 onwards. Both countries feel that the other has snatched-off its rights. Consequently, both countries see one another as rivals. The accompanying emotions have proven to be a major hurdle in the progress and prosperity of both countries. It is now time for both India and Pakistan to rid themselves of negative feelings, and develop a new mind-set that is based on the principle of 'I win, and so do you'. If this happens, new doors to progress will open for the peoples of both countries and, of course, for the Kashmiris as well.

From 1947 till the present day, both India and Pakistan have seen each other as enemies. But if the change in psyche that I call for occurs, both will begin to see each other as friends. This will prove to be a major boost in enabling both of them to work for the welfare of their own people, while also paving the way for joint action in developing the region as a whole. This is the 'win-win solution' that we must work towards.

Moving Towards a Solution

IN REALITY, THE choice for Pakistan today is not between democratic and military rule, but, between one of two states: to remain in the impasse that it finds itself in, thereby wiping itself off the roadmap of the global community, or to extricate itself from this impasse and move ahead.

In the history of a country it sometimes happens that its course of progress comes to a standstill. At such times, it becomes imperative for it to take bold steps if it wants to move ahead. Naturally, this is a sensitive matter and such steps might go wholly against popular sentiment. This is why such courageous decisions are often taken by strong military rulers rather than democratically-elected politicians who, being chosen by their people, have to pander to their emotions and prejudices and so are generally unable to take such steps as might hurt their sentiments.

Let me cite one instance to make this point. The French President Charles de Gaulle (d. 1970) was a top general in the French Army, but later manipulated his way to the post of President. On the face of it, this was an anti-democratic move, but by doing so, de Gaulle was able to save France in a manner that a democratically-elected government could not possibly have adopted. He unilaterally announced the end of French rule in a number of French colonies in Africa and elsewhere, because this was proving to be a burden for France, rendering France as the 'sick man' of Europe in the wake of the Second World War, when all European countries except for France were making great strides towards progress and development. It was this decision, against

the wishes of the people, which made France one of the developed nations of the world. Obviously, this move, which was widely unpopular in France, was a necessary one for the greater good of the country, but only a bold and strong ruler could do this, unmindful of popular sentiment and opposition.

The current situation in Pakistan is somewhat similar. Pakistan's undeclared war against India over Kashmir has brought immense loss and destruction to Pakistan itself. Consequently, the entire world views Pakistan as a country with no stability. Foreign investors are now extremely reluctant to invest in Pakistan. The proxy war in Kashmir has led to rapidly escalating instability and violence within Pakistan itself, causing grave problems for its own people. Scores of Pakistan's religious and educational institutions have turned into centres of violence and destruction. Because of all this, Pakistan is witnessing an alarming brain-drain, with most of its highly-qualified and capable people fleeing the country because of the ongoing violence, the lack of developmental opportunities, and the poor state of infrastructure in the country.

The completely unrealistic policies of Pakistan with regard to Kashmir have proven to be a stumbling block that is blocking the path to Pakistan's further development. The only way out for Pakistan is to change its policy as regards Kashmir, that is, it should rather focus on the opportunities for positive development and progress that are available to it. Pakistan must now recognize the status quo in Kashmir, and accept the Line of Control in Kashmir as the international border between India and Pakistan, albeit perhaps with some necessary adjustments. This can be a permanent solution

to the Kashmir conflict. For this, Pakistan must cease its emotion-driven policies and politics with regard to Kashmir and, instead, adopt a sensible, realistic and pragmatic approach. Once it is able to establish peace with India by settling the Kashmir dispute, it will be able to work towards establishing peace within its own borders and work for the progress and development of the country.

For the last sixty years Pakistan's politics have revolved round the Kashmir issue. However, Pakistan's efforts to annex Kashmir, that is, to change the status quo in Kashmir, have only resulted in massive destruction—in Kashmir and within Pakistan itself. Nothing positive has ever come out of these efforts in the past, nor will they bear fruit in the future.

For Pakistan to accept the status quo in Kashmir and the Line of Control as a permanent and accepted border between India and Pakistan is, admittedly, difficult. But if Pakistani leaders gather the courage to take this bold step, it is bound to lead to miraculous consequences. It will break down the barriers between India and Pakistan and build a relationship of close friendship between the two countries. The negative mentality of the Pakistani people, built on hatred for India, will give way to a positive approach. Trade links between the two countries will flourish, to the benefit of both. In spite of being one as regards language and culture, both countries, have become 'distant neighbours'. Subsequently, with the restoration of all the links, they will be able to benefit from each other in the fields of education and culture. By ending its enmity with India, Pakistan will be able to progress in the same manner as Japan was able to after it ceased its enmity with the United States in the aftermath of the Second World War.

The truth is that when any individual or group tries to achieve any goal, he finds himself in a set of situations which may be called the status quo.

Now there are two starting points for him. One is to seek to change the status quo by removing the roadblock for further action. The other is to accept the status quo as it is and to make concerted efforts to avail of the opportunities which are already available in the given status quo. This second approach is what I call 'positive status quoism'. This is in accordance both with reason and with the teachings of Islam. The Quran enjoins: "Reconciliation is the best. (4:128) That is, the best way to settle a conflict is to follow the policy of reconciliation. In other words, conflicts are best resolved by the contending parties avoiding confrontation and by coming to a mutual understanding.

This suggestion to build better relations between India and Pakistan through acceptance of the status quo is not a new one. As long ago as the early 1960s, during the rule of Jawaharlal Nehru, the governments of both the countries had evidently agreed on this principle. The Kashmiri leader, Shaykh Mohd Abdullah, had even left for Pakistan as a mediator. However, because of Nehru's sudden demise, this historic agreement could not be arrived at.

"By 1956, Nehru had publicly offered a settlement of Kashmir with Pakistan over the Ceasefire line (now converted into LOC). On May 23, 1964, Nehru asked Shaykh Abdullah to meet Ayub Khan in Rawalpindi in an effort to resolve the Kashmir imbroglio. The Pakistani leader agreed to a summit with Nehru, to be held in June 1964. This message was urgently telegraphed to Nehru on May 26. But Just as Nehru's consent reached Karachi,

the world also learnt that Nehru had died in his sleep. And with that a major opportunity for peaceful solution over Kashmir was lost. (*The Hindustan Times*, June 18, 2001)

If Pakistan were to accept the status quo in Kashmir as a permanent settlement and the Line of Control as the international border it would entail no harm at all for Pakistan and indeed for the Muslims as a whole. In spite of remaining separate from Pakistan, Kashmir would still remain a Muslim majority area. Furthermore, it is an uncontestable fact that the Muslims who stayed on in India are in a much better position than those who opted for Pakistan and Bangladesh. Thus joining India will only help the Kashmiris in many ways. Just take one example to illustrate this point. Hakim Abdul Hamid of India and Hakim Mohd. Sayeed of Pakistan, both being real brothers contributed greatly to the field of medicine in particular. But Hakim Mohd. Sayeed was shot dead in Karachi, while Hakim Abdul Hamid continued to work in peace until he died a natural death in Delhi.

Another point is that adopting a policy of conciliation with India would amount to putting an end to confrontation with its powerful neighbour. Such a step could throw open the doors to all kinds of progress. An example of this is provided by the present Japan. Before the Second World War Japan and America were each other's enemies. But after the war Japan opted for a policy of total reconciliation. Consequently, Japan emerged on the world map as an economic superpower.

It must also be recognized that the policies that Pakistan has been pursuing have proven to be a major reason for Islam getting a bad name. In line with its

present policy, Pakistan has used hatred against India as a means to create an artificial sense of Pakistani unity. The result of this wrong policy has been that Pakistan (including erstwhile East Pakistan) has failed to unite in the name of Islam but appears to be totally united on the basis of hatred for India. This has given critics an excuse to argue that Islam lacks the capacity to unite the Muslims. *The Hindustan Times* of June 18, 2001, wrote that "Islam does not hold Pakistan together any more, but anti-Indianism does."

If Pakistan adopted a conciliatory approach, its people would develop a positive approach and attitude to life, which would facilitate the emergence of a new era, wherein Islam, not anti-Indianism, could become the basis for Pakistani unity. It might open all doors to God's blessings upon Pakistan.

They Sat Together, They Talked and then They Departed

ON JULY 14, 2001, the then Pakistan President General Parvez Musharraf came to New Delhi from Islamabad. He had five long sessions with the then Prime Minister of India, Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The main objective of these meetings was to explore the possibilities of a resolution to the Kashmir issue. However, the talks failed, and two days later, on the night of July 16, 2001, Musharraf returned to Islamabad.

What was the reason for the failure of these high level talks? The basic reason according to the information we have was that the Indian Prime Minister wanted to maintain the political and geographical status quo that existed at that time in Jammu and Kashmir, and to have normal relations restored in all other matters between the two countries, in order that the journey towards progress, having halted for so long, might be set in motion once again. But probably President Pervez Musharraf insisted that Kashmir issue be addressed in favour of Pakistan, —to the effect that the whole of Kashmir belonged to Pakistan—and only then would he be willing to establish normal relations with India. The Indian Prime Minister did not accept this suggestion and then, naturally, the talks broke down. When Parvez Musharraf arrived in India he made such statements as suggested that he was willing to enter into an agreement through negotiation with India on Kashmir. For instance, in his speech at the Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi he said that a military solution to the Kashmir problem was not possible. Similarly, at the Agra press conference, he spoke about the acceptance of reality. He also said

that he had come to India with an open mind. But later he left for Paksitan without any agreement.

My assessment is that he perhaps feared strong opposition on his return from the Pakistani people, who for decades had been fed on a steady diet of anti-India hatred. In the words of a commentator, General Parvez Musharraf knew that the emotional people of Pakistan, who were unable to tolerate defeat at the hands of India even in the field of cricket, would not be able to countenance political defeat in the matter of Kashmir. But he should also have known that as long as Pakistan failed to enter into an agreement with India, Pakistan's downward economic trend would be inevitable.

In my opinion, if Musharraf had agreed to accept the Indian stand on Kashmir, it would have meant choosing a lesser evil. It would simply have meant accepting the loss of something that Pakistan had already lost. The cash benefit for Pakistan of this acceptance would amount to opening all the locked doors of progress and development. If the Pakistani government continues to refuse to accept the Indian position on Kashmir and carries on with its undeclared war against India, it will continue to be deprived of Kashmir, and will drastically add to its own economic ruin, which is already approaching a point of no return.

The Task Ahead

IF WE LOOK at the history of Kashmir over the last 200 years, we can divide it into three main periods. The first period was marked by the arrival of a group of Sufis in Kashmir. They played an instrumental role in the spread of Islam in the region. A vast majority of the Kashmiris converted to Islam.

The Sufis gave the gift of Islam in terms of religion, but they failed to give them wisdom in the broader sense so that they might lead their lives successfully in their society. As a result, Islam was reduced to a culture for the Kashmiris. They did not become imbued with awareness, nor did they receive any guidance which might have outlined the proper goal for their lives. That is why we see that the lives of most of the Kashmiris revolve around the graves of 'saints' or dargahs. A ritualistic form of religion evolved, which I call 'dargahi Islam' or cultural Islam. The harm it did was that no true, deeper understanding of Islam could be developed which would have enabled people to see things in a correct and far-sighted manner, and distinguish broadly between right and wrong. This unawareness made the Kashmiris vulnerable to negative politics which had no relation with real Islam. Neither was such politics going to benefit the Kashmiris from the worldly point of view.

One benefit of Islam is that it gives man a spiritual centre to focus on; it tells man how to worship God. Kashmiris did benefit from Islam in this respect, but in another respect they remained largely deprived of the benefits of Islam.

This second respect may be termed the training of

minds. The Kashmiris were not trained along the lines of proper Islamic wisdom which might have enabled them to think and in the light of which they might have taken right decisions in different fields, in the spirit of Islam. It would perhaps be right to say that Kashmiris imbibed the religious aspect of Islam only in a very limited sense, but it never became a part of their rational process of thinking.

The first instance in this regard is when the Kashmiris, incited by certain leaders, rose against the Dogra rule. From the Islamic view point, it was nothing but an emotional outburst. That is why we find that, in spite of achieving success, this movement made no contribution in the building of the future of Kashmiris. This movement against the Dogra rule was launched by leaders with political interests; it did not result from Islamic consciousness in the real sense of the word.

After 1947, a new period of movements commenced in Kashmir. In this phase the Kashmiri people came under the influence of two big movements. One was launched in the name of secularism and another in the name of Islam. But both these movements were the products of the political ambitions of certain leaders. Neither was born as a result of Islamic consciousness, in the real sense.

The secular leaders launched their movements after 1947 in the name of Azad Kashmir or Pakistani Kashmir. These leaders did gain materially and in terms of fame but, for the people of Kashmir, it amounted to running towards a target without a destination. These were movements which had a beginning but no end.

Another class of leaders consisted of those who launched their movements in the name of Islamic

Kashmir and Nizam-e-Mustafa. These leaders used the name of Islam but they had nothing to offer but emotionalism and wishful thinking. They were running after romantic goals, followed by adherents who thought that they were going towards the destination of Islam. But the truth was that, let alone Islam, their movements were not going to benefit the Kashmiris even in the worldly sense. This is the world of realities: nothing positive can come here from emotional politics.

It is because of the futility of these movements that the Kashmiris have taken to the course of violence since 1989. Violent, destructive movements among the Kashmiris were in fact the result of their state of depression. Earlier they had run after their unwise leaders, but when their movements yielded no result, out of depression and frustration they started an armed struggle.

The right way for the Kashmiris would be to make a reassessment of their past and, admitting their past mistakes, chart a new course for themselves in order to build their future. It is a fact that they have lost the first chance. Now the only possible way for them is to consciously grasp the second chance and wholeheartedly make use of it to their own advantage. This programme for their future should be based on three points: education, economic development, and spreading the message of peace, harmony and spirituality to the people. They must completely abandon politics and the path of armed struggle. They must set the feet of this whole generation on the path of education. To the end, they should focus their attention on building high-class educational institutions. For at least 25 years they should spend all their energies on the field of education.

So far as the economic field is concerned, there are extraordinary opportunities for business and industry in the state. Kashmiris must productively use the vast economic and other resources which are still to a large extent lying untapped.

The third field is that of the communication of the message of peace and spirituality among the people. If peace prevails in Kashmir, the tourism industry will flourish. This will be a great opportunity for the Kashmiris to spread the message of peace and spirituality to the world, and this will contribute to success in both this world and the next.

Kashmir : Heaven on Earth

FOR CENTURIES KASHMIR has been known as 'heaven on earth'. In the past, Kashmir was ruled by a series of rulers who were not indigenous inhabitants of the land – Pathans, Mughals, Sikhs and Dogras. But throughout this period Kashmir still remained 'heaven on earth'. People from all over the world visited Kashmir. If the Taj Mahal symbolized architectural beauty on the subcontinent, Kashmir was the symbol of the beauty of nature.

This history shows that for Kashmir to make progress, it is not necessary that it should be ruled by Kashmiris. Political power is a kind of political headache. Kashmir needs constructive activities to be revived for its progress, and development, and nothing else.

The Quran mentions everything that is good for man. But it does not mention freedom or liberty. This shows that the word freedom is very deceptive. It has no real meaningfulness. A clear practical example of this it can be seen in 60 Muslim countries, most of which won their political independence after a long and bloody struggle, in the course of which their people made immense sacrifices. However, in actual fact, these countries are not really independent in the true sense of the term. Many of them, such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, are now in the throes of civil war, where rival groups are fighting each other for power. If the Kashmiris do not realize this and stop insisting on independence, they are likely to meet the same unenviable fate. That is why they should abandon their present political struggle and, instead, concentrate on the work of positive and constructive development.

In July 2001, I was invited to an international conference that was held in Switzerland. After the conference we were taken sightseeing to different places. One of the participants was an 80-year old Kashmiri lady. When she saw the beauty of Switzerland, tears came to her eyes and she exclaimed, 'Our Kashmir was as beautiful as Switzerland, but today it stands destroyed'.

Who destroyed Kashmir? It was certainly no government that did so. Rather, the entire blame for it must be placed on the shoulders of those inept Kashmiri leaders who, with their emotionally-driven rhetoric, completely misled their people and pushed them on to the destructive path of militancy. Had they led them instead along the path of educational and economic advancement, Kashmir might today have been a model of progress and prosperity. But these incompetent leaders, with their completely unrealistic dreams and empty slogans, have caused such terrible damage to the Kashmiris that it cannot possibly be undone, not even in a hundred years.

To conclude and to reiterate what I have been repeatedly stressing throughout this booklet, the time has now come for the Kashmiris to completely and permanently abandon the path of militancy, and, instead, to adopt the path of peace and progress. Only then can the dream of Kashmir as 'heaven on earth' come true.

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Peace in Kashmir

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